

ARMA VIRUMQUE CANO

**HMS**  
**PRESS**

ARMA VIRUMQUE CANO began as a Grade XIII Latin class assignment at College Avenue SS in Woodstock Ontario in 1970, under the direction of Carol Sales. It was intended to be an updated version of one of the books of the Aenied by Virgil, whereby Aeneus travels to Heaven at the end of the world, searching for God.

As the years rolled on, I rewrote and added to the manuscript until the final version was published in 1986, in a limited edition of 50 copies in 8X10 format. Its only review stated:

"Wayne Ray's *Arma Virumque Cano* ("Of Arms and the Man I sing" - a quotation from Virgil's Aenid) is an excursion through religious hyper-space in which the Hero and the Priestess contend in characteristic typefaces. A kind of manic charm is unfortunately too slight to sustain the burden of thought, gloom, and despair laid upon it and the reader is inclined to share "the 1st / horrible wrath / of your truly / unforgiving / GOD!!" This book was probably a lot more fun to write than it is to read. Elizabeth Woods

## **ARMA VIRUMQUE CANO**

(Aeneid Updated)

In the beginning was there God,  
creating the heavens and the Earth,  
and He saw that this was good.

In the beginning God sent forth the light  
from the sun and divided the darkness  
on the face of the Earth, placing the fishes  
in the sea and lakes and the wide rivers  
and He placed the birds in the air  
and other creatures on the land  
and He saw that this too was good.

God became lonely soon after and set  
forth upon the land, to rule the land  
and counsel the creatures of the air  
and water and sand, a new being  
in His image and called him Man,  
and He saw that this was good.

In the beginning.

\* \* \* \*

I sing of arms and the man  
of he who has travelled  
in search of the truth,  
for an answer which God  
has for him and Mankind.  
He has left unrequited  
loves and hopes  
and faithful friends  
and set upon this quest  
to the Holy Kingdom of God,  
into those invisible regions  
where we cannot follow.  
A grave place, cloaked  
in mystery and hidden  
under the golden arches

of the last church of the faithful.

After a long search  
to the four corners of the Earth  
and the seven seas and  
the deserts and mountains of the Earth,  
he comes upon the crumbling walls  
of the entrance to the Kingdom of God.

The Priestess,  
accosts him as he approaches.

Our Hero speaks;

*"O Great Priestess,  
true is it said  
that this is the entrance  
to the Kingdom of God.  
Grant me this one wish,  
that I might go into  
the presence  
of the Holy Father,  
inspire me to see  
events in futurity,  
give unto me what Heaven  
has promised my fate.  
Fix my wanderings and  
find a place for the exiles  
of human race".*

With this said,  
the Priestess began to speak;

*"You, my son, because  
of your faithful beliefs  
and since you have shown  
courage on your quest,  
this wish shall be granted  
and only unto you.  
By night and by day  
the gates to Heaven  
lie open for all to enter,  
but to regain this entrance  
after you have finished, is the task.*

*There have been a few  
of a faith such as yours  
who have been able  
to retrace their steps.  
There remains now, in this  
final realm of God,  
the remains of Man's past,  
a key, for in the dying forests  
you will find a tree,  
green in leaf and stem.  
Bring a twig first to me.  
To prove your faith,  
this must you do!"*

**"IBANT OBSCURI SOLA SUB NOCTE PER UMBRUM."**

On he went, shrouded in darkness  
with only the night's warmth,  
through the lonely leafless forests,  
seen through tearless eyes,  
endless sighs,  
through stinking bogs  
and choking fogs.

He felt hopeless,  
lay down to rest  
in the deepest dark night  
and awoke in a grassy field,  
the center of which,  
when early light had woken him,  
was filled with the greenest  
of leaves and having seized  
a healthy bough,  
rushed back to the dwelling place  
of the prophetic priestess.

Her color changed,  
her face was not the same  
and from her throat  
hollow groans and tempest came.  
With trembling limbs  
and a heavy breast,  
her staring eyes began to roll  
as God's power filled her immortal soul.

*"To all mankind  
in silent shades and  
mediocrity,  
I will now reveal that  
which the Lord God  
has set about Himself.  
He has spoken to me  
and it is to be revealed,  
for when He speaks,  
out of his mouth come  
all the hungry cities.  
He has stated;  
'Go forth,  
under the umbric light,*

*through the phantom  
dwellings of the past,  
through the old cities  
and towns where Grief  
and Revenge and Failure  
place themselves  
and those of Cancer,  
Squalid Poverty, and  
Malnutrition in the  
Halls of Sorrow are beset.  
Pass through  
the Halls of the Weeping Children  
and tear at your wounds  
so that they may bleed again  
and pass through the Realm of Fear  
and Plague and all forms of beings  
horrible to look at  
and Leprosy and Incest  
and Genocide and the long vines  
of greed and graft,  
wet with the eternal slime  
and you must breath in  
the wicked breath of all met  
and be without sin,  
for sin comes in groups,  
in battalions,  
like the frosts which blight  
the sweet blossoms of youth,  
Cool the burning  
passion in your veins  
and feign bad habits.'  
Thus saith your God."*

## **FAILURE**

If the mind could rectify mistakes  
before they are made,  
then life would be without despair.  
Despair has engulfed me,  
washing away my desire for life.  
Life has given me a distasteful feeling  
with few glimpses of laughter and hope.  
Hope is lost and I must suffer  
throughout my life with Earth's people,  
People mock me and gossip  
behind my back with false faces  
and false smiles are directed at me.  
I turn away but still hear whispering  
voices of deceit and I will never  
achieve satisfaction in my life and  
failure is my name and embodiment.  
I feel in a remote sort of way,  
a depression sweeping my being,  
sadness of failure fills my aching heart  
like a raging tide. I am just a block of stone.



## HALLS OF SORROW

Sometimes I get these feeling  
of sullen sadness and restless  
resolutions of life as if the last  
orchid of the forest was placed  
before my wondrous face  
and without any feelings of guilt...  
Crushed into a worthless heap  
upon the floor at my feet, and there is  
no placed pang of pleasantness now.  
O God, Great God,  
the mystical mood music of leisure  
passing from my lips,  
to fall to the hard ground at your feet  
never to rise again in our dull days.  
At a time of sadness and restless joy  
the crumpled orchid  
restores its beauty and falls,  
crumpled, restored, crumpled,  
restored....  
Lights upon a ceaseless ceiling  
sending lifes memories out the door,  
carpets upon a forever floor,  
covering our pent up feelings  
of orchid sorrow.

## **HALLS OF THE WEEPING CHILDREN**

### **WINTER' S CHILD**

Come the storm of winter's night  
and in the blinding blizzard light  
sirens wail or is it children's fright  
echoing in the storms cold flight,  
but in the ever present darkness white  
we, while inside by warm firelight  
feign the cries of storm by night,  
a frozen heart beneath a street light.

### **SPRING'S CHILD**

How strange the curves  
and ups and downs of my life.  
Hedges on either side  
of this infinite road, leading  
away, winding away,  
from that vaginal door,  
never ending, up and down,  
up and away.

### **SUMMER'S CHILD**

Refugees  
the children swim  
out into the ocean.  
The boats wait, cold water  
closes over their heads,  
for the strength of refugee children  
is small, they struggle,  
they drown.

## **AUTUMN'S CHILD**

and the rains came and set a coolness  
upon the land, and it was not seen,  
and the sun shone and dried the rain,  
warming the land and it was not felt,  
and the winds blew across the land  
and through the forests,  
and it was not heard,  
and the rains came  
and the sun shone  
and the winds blew...

## **CHILDREN'S CHILD**

Street urchin on the streets 'till dawn  
and all the people pass him by.  
He spreads himself on a newly mown lawn  
and looks wearily at the sky.  
Where does the future lead him to?  
Perhaps a golden sunset, or  
perhaps a sea darkened blue  
or death so sweet and subdued.

## **THE REALM OF FEAR**

For every stone and shadow knows  
what evil lurks amongst the rows  
of every line of trees that grow  
melting tracks in new fallen snow  
and in the fogs that creep at night  
that fill the fields with eery light,  
it hides in shadows out of sight  
waiting to use its fear and might  
and if you think you can stop and rest  
when travelling forests on a quest  
beware that when you see blood on stone,  
around the next corner it will be your own.

## ROOM OF DESPAIR

I take this time to ask God  
or Christ or my soul for forgiveness  
or compassion for all my wrong doings,  
bad, no evil thoughts and deeds.  
I talk gibberish to pass the time,  
I write poetry and avoid the rhyme.  
The lights grow dim  
and the sun sets on my desire  
not to have desires.

The door closes,  
the chain falls against the wall  
the razor cuts the skin just below  
the water line and the warmth of death  
enters my soul.  
My warm blood, spurt by pounding spurt,  
leaves my black heart.  
My shapeless eye feel weak.  
With the other arm, I place the razor  
on the edge of the tub,  
smile a faint prisoners smile,  
close my eyes and sink down,  
down into a place I've both feared and  
loved and I see myself from afar,  
floating down this last road  
and even in death I find it hard to die,  
just as in life, I found it hard to live,  
see while looking, cry while weeping.  
Two doors await me.  
One to Heaven and to Hell.  
Fire on the crest, ice on the Mantle.  
My soul on a long thin wire.  
My wound bleeds again,  
red stains the grass at the doorstep.  
I reach the threshold, I realize my own expectations,  
know my own limits,  
The door opens, knowing I was right.

This great portion of the quest finished  
our Hero came upon a road  
leading to a clear river  
which encircles the Kingdom.  
Here, Father Time,  
waits for someone new to ascend to God.  
Here also, a few spirits of the good at heart  
and heroes of wars have gone on  
to the sandy banks for their passage across  
the placid river Styx  
with the spirits of young women,  
few though they be.

*"Who are you, who wish to cross  
to the other shore along the waste  
dominions of the dead?  
Tell me from whence you came  
and where you want to go?"*

Thus spoke the Ferryman.

The Priestess suddenly appeared  
and stood beside our hero.  
She stepped out of a cloud of dust  
presenting the Ferryman  
with the green twigs  
and spoke, saying;

*"We have come from Mother Earth  
and wish to go into the presence of God,  
the Father in Heaven, the Creator".*

Great Apocalypse  
with its four horsemen  
make the kingdom shudder  
with their great evil  
and hold fast the entrance  
to the cave leading to the Realm of God.

The Priestess,  
seeing the riders  
opening jaws of anger,  
throws each one,  
illusions of peace, and  
shades of love and hope.

As they recline on their steeds  
our interlopers gain  
entrance to the cave  
and journey away  
from the peaceful river of time.

From the caves far most exit,  
another road leads to the  
Sacred Groves of the Lonely Virgins,  
amongst whom a lovely young woman  
wanders and as our Hero came near  
and recognized her and she, him,  
she spoke, in dreams and words;

*"Alas, it is you  
who had left my love,  
and set upon this quest".  
(please come back to me  
even in death i've waited so long  
don't be afraid to ask my heart  
where i am going)*

*"O how I've waited  
these long years  
for your return and died  
of a broken and lonely heart  
because of our  
great and lost love".  
(these are the thoughts  
of my loneliness  
dark shadows haunt my dreams  
shadows of what might have been  
had i opened my heart  
i've waited too long  
for you to say it  
i alone hear the words  
and here upon my bed i lie  
where dark shadows linger  
never to know  
what might have been  
had i opened my heart to you  
and the worst dreams  
are thoughts of loneliness  
and i was going to touch you  
just now but i hesitated a moment  
you were gone  
i so long to touch you  
hesitated, gone again  
let me reach you  
unlock the longings  
within my heart)*

Our Hero  
soothed her with words,  
alas, in vain  
for she remained lonely  
even in death.

*(not having known love  
i dreamt of going to your empty  
house or apartment or lodging  
on a steamy dark night under  
a blue moon where we drank  
and talked and laughed  
while you stripped me naked  
with your eyes  
phantom fingers up and down  
my thighs  
your tongue on my breasts  
and having never known love  
i dreamt.*

Turning, she walked  
into the peaceful groves  
and found solace  
in the serenity of the self.

*blue sleep ocean water  
clinging to me  
your voice calling to me  
you found another love to hold  
while my love grew stale and old  
i longed for you and called your name  
while you were loving another  
i was so vain to think  
that you would wait for me  
maybe it was my destiny  
to whore myself  
to submit my overt sexuality  
to many men lovers beasts devils  
i just don't love you any more  
and you wouldn't understand  
that the minds of men  
are shrouded in hell  
the words are falling off  
and all is well round to nothing  
and everyone yells in kingdom come  
dark hollows taking shape  
in masses of glass  
and shadows of darkness)*

As the Priestess  
and our Hero wandered  
they came to the  
Fields of Friendship of Days Past.  
Here they met the souls  
of friends of former wars,  
one beckoned, saying;



A thousand battles have we fought  
a thousand battles won,  
seen fighting pride  
across those bloody plains.  
Bayonets up and fixed to kill  
the enemy's seen and off we go,  
our courage was fleeing forward.  
Now for us these wars are over,  
each battle fought was won,  
peace shall come upon this Earth,  
until there is another one.  
I am here now in God's realm  
and what joy does fill my heart  
to see you safe and free.  
Let us stay friends even in death,  
a strong kinship, you and me.

Our hero wept  
tears of happiness  
until the Priestess spoke;

*"Night is rushing on  
and we must not spend  
our precious time in idle  
weeping and the tearing of flesh,  
for here the road divides,  
one part leading through  
the Holy City to the House of God,  
and the other part is for me  
for my journey is done  
and through nearby gates  
I must go, back to my beginnings.  
Go forth with a stout heart  
and in good faith."*

With these words  
she rose into the air  
and in a rush of wind  
and a cloud of dust,  
she disappeared  
from whence she came!

As he walked through the gates  
to the City of God,  
the air became clear  
and the rivers ran clean  
and he came upon green grasses,  
fields and great buildings  
of charm and beauty.  
As he walked through  
this wonderful City of God,  
he passes the souls  
of great men and women  
and there is a song in the air  
while the sun shines bright overhead.

After a short walk our Hero  
comes to the Mansion of God.  
He steps into the presence of God  
and spoke, saying;

*"In devotion all there is of us  
is for you, God.*

*We take a lowly place to serve you  
with a consistency of the spirit.  
In this faith my heart is set to do  
all the will of God,  
the hardships and the toil,  
to lay our tributes at the feet  
of one who is nobler than we.*

*In harmony with your character  
are Men who have tried to stem  
the tide of sin in unapplauded toil  
among the street poor and pave a path  
of whole hearted consecration  
into spheres of sublime service.*

*O Great God, our father in Heaven,  
we bless thee for all ministries  
and for uniting us all by the bonds of tender sympathy.*

*You have done great things for us  
and we are glad and send sweet messages  
for your grace and power.*

*O God, send us answers that shall make us glad.  
Give life once again to our noblest intentions.  
Comfort those that mourn  
and tear at wounds and grant unto us tender  
scolices and enable us to fortify our spirits  
against that which admits us in the future.*

*Fill us with noble desires.  
Help us to scatter the darkness  
from our minds and hearts  
and our souls. I am sorry though,  
that we Humans are so fondly attached  
to those things which so easily perish  
and live lives as tasteless  
as a communion wafer.*

*O God, Great God, but alas,  
who am I to speak, but a puny man  
beside your great realm.  
Why are not the waters sparkling  
and the air clear on Earth?*

*In the beginning you placed us  
upon this Earth to learn from nature,  
but have we been looking so long  
that we do not see? Heard your call  
but not been listening?*

*Have we been sleeping much too long?*

*Surely you can't say that we've been wrong?*

*War, famine, pestilence, disease,  
you say it's us, but this can not be.  
Your hand has been in all living things,  
some species are going and others are gone,  
you say it's us, but you must be wrong!*

*We cannot die!*

*You are with us, aren't you?*

*God, come back!*

*Where are you going?"*

\* \* \* \*

God rose up into the air  
and spoke in flames  
to melt his icy stare,  
while the ground beneath  
our Hero's feet,  
trembled such that no beast  
nor bird could sleep  
and all the oceans under the sun,  
boiled and burned  
and rose in clouds,  
creating the last heavenly shroud.  
He raised his arms  
and thunder rolled,  
lightning flared and rain was bold.

**HOW DARE YOU, O COMMON MAN  
ACCUSE ME OF RUINING YOUR LAND  
AND NOW YOU COME AND SPEAK OF DEEDS  
TO RECTIFY YOUR INFANTILE NEEDS,  
AND HOW CAN YOU SPEAK OF PEACE,  
OF HOLY TOIL AND LACK OF SIN,  
AND WHY HAVE YOU  
NOT DONE YOUR PART,  
TO SEEK THE ANSWERS  
FROM WITHIN YOUR HEART?  
I SEE NO REASON TO HELP MANKIND,  
FOR YOU AND YOURS ARE ALL LOST !  
FLING YOURSELF UPON THE GROUND,  
UPON THIS ROTTING PIECE OF SOD  
AND FEEL THE LAST HORRIBLE WRATH,  
OF YOUR TRULY UNFORGIVING GOD ! ! !**

